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# Advocate of Peace.

VOL. LXX.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER, 1908.

No. 10

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,  
PUBLISHERS,  
31 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

MONTHLY, ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR. TEN CENTS PER COPY  
Entered at the Boston Post Office as Second Class Matter.

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## The Turkish-Bulgarian Crisis from the Point of View of World Peace.

During the past month the eyes of the world have been focused on the Balkan region. It is useless here even to summarize what has taken place, so fully have the details been given in the press. What is the significance of it all, from the point of view of world peace? Why has there been no war? What bearing will the new arrangements have for the peace of the future? These are the capital questions.

Immediately on the Bulgarian declaration of independence the war mongers everywhere began uttering lugubrious prophecies. All Europe was to be in flames. Some of the worst of the papers declared over and over again that hostilities had already begun. It was, indeed, difficult for any one to see how the crisis could be gotten through without fierce fighting and bloodshed. But no fighting has occurred, and the danger of war now seems past. That such a revolution and such a breaking up of the Turkish Empire should have taken place without war is truly one of the marvels of history. It is about the last region on the earth where one would have expected a political upheaval unaccompanied by a storm of

war. Properly understood, therefore, nothing could give greater hope to the friends of peace than the fact that war has not occurred.

Many factors have worked together to conserve the peace. Some of these have been of a high order, others not so high. The chief element has, without doubt, been the spirit and conduct of the Young Turks through their Committee of Union and Progress. These men, living in exile in Europe for a decade and a half, have become possessed of the modern spirit of love of liberty and justice. They have also learned, through contact with the institutions of Western Europe, with the Peace Congresses and the Hague Conferences, to appreciate the power of patient, pacific measures as opposed to revolutionary violence. They have naturally, therefore, sympathized with Bulgaria's desire for complete independence, and been opposed to sanctioning any attempt to reduce her to submission by force. They have, unquestionably, felt deeply grieved at the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire at the moment when they were determined to establish right and justice throughout the whole domain. But they have preferred to see their dominion narrowed rather than violate their own principles by attempting to subdue Bulgaria, and thus inevitably bring on a general war. No appreciation of the wisdom and good sense which they have shown can be too high.

Again, the coöperation of the powers which were parties to the Berlin treaty of 1878, has been on a vastly higher plane than it was at the time that treaty was made. They have—at least a considerable number of them—recognized this time the right of the Balkan and Cretan peoples to have some say as to what shall be their political destiny. It is in this enlarged spirit of respect for political rights and liberty that they have been disposed to treat the violations of the Berlin treaty which have occurred, a treaty at the bottom of which lay might and the spirit of political domination, and consequently no little injustice. No one need fear, therefore, that the fate which has befallen the Berlin treaty will weaken in the least the force and value of international treaties hereafter. The opposite will be true, for the new international treaties and conventions now being concluded are being drawn in the advanced modern spirit, free in large measure from the tyrannical and base elements which vitiated many of the treaties of the past, and made it necessary that they be gotten out of the way or thoroughly revised. The Berlin

treaty, which at the time did something for the progress of justice, has gone none too soon. International treaty making, like everything else international, has needed thorough-going reformation.

There is no doubt, furthermore, that the moral effect of the Hague Conferences and Conventions has been, silently, powerful in determining the conduct of the governments which have been involved in the Balkan events. These governments, all of which are parties to the Hague Conventions, have been more patient, less rash, less selfish, — selfish as one or two of them have been, — more respectful of the rights of others than heretofore. They have clearly made a studied and sincere effort to prevent the outbreak of war, and to bring about such a readjustment in that region as will render peace more secure in the future.

Fear of the results of a war has unquestionably played its part. But that is by no means a base and unworthy motive. Recklessness as to what war might bring forth has been one of the worst follies and iniquities of the past in Europe. It is an encouraging evidence of growing moral elevation that the nations have become increasingly afraid of war.

There have been, we are quite aware, exhibitions of greed and unrestrained passion in the occurrences. The annexation by Austria-Hungary of Bosnia and Herzegovina savors of the base and avaricious spirit which has dominated so much of European politics, while Serbia's wrath and blusterings have made it all too clear that the spirit out of which war springs is still in places very much alive. But that these exhibitions of greed and passion have been so few, and that they have been for the most part held in check by wise councils in a region where violence and unparalleled disorder have so long held the upper hand, has been the amazing thing.

What the full and final outcome will be, no one can yet foresee; but that the general result will be the material advancement of justice, political liberty, order and peace in that long distracted quarter of the world, no one can reasonably doubt. Everywhere throughout the Ottoman Empire people of all races and religions have joined in the most enthusiastic rejoicings over the changes which have taken place in the government. The people have evidently been long tired and sick of the old order and ready for the transformation. This fact alone makes it certain that the new order has come to stay.

The Conference of the Powers, now agreed upon, when it meets to consider the infringements of the Berlin treaty, will not consent to see political liberty put back in the Balkans by the reduction of Bulgaria to her former position as a vassal of Turkey, even if the Turkish government should wish it. The new régime at Constantinople, with its vast possibilities for Asiatic as well as European Turkey, will be recognized and confirmed. One could wish that the act of Austria-Hungary in appropriating Bosnia and

Herzegovina might be condemned and annulled by the Conference and these states allowed freely to determine their own political future. That would be a deed worthy of a great conference of powers holding themselves to be enlightened and civilized.

There is one other thing that the Conference ought to do if it wishes to complete the foundations for permanent quiet and good understanding in that region; it ought to neutralize the Black Sea and permanently remove all armed vessels from it, and open the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to the vessels of commerce of all nations at all times. It ought to be easy to persuade the four nations whose territories border upon the Black Sea — namely, Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Roumania — to agree to this neutralization, as it would save them all, especially the two greater powers, great expense in the maintenance of their Black Sea naval establishments. An agreement to this effect would be in accord with the spirit and practice of the times. Nothing could be more effective in completing the transformation which has been going on, so as to insure for all time peace and goodwill in the whole Black Sea region.

### A Bizarre Peace Congress.

A Peace Congress in which militarism, in one or another of its forms, gets incidental support from certain members, as is frequently the case in peace meetings, is one thing; a Peace Congress, so-called, whose avowed aim is to promote, along with certain peace measures, the building up of a big and ever bigger navy, in rivalry with other nations, like that held last month in North Carolina, is quite another thing. It is not intolerant to say that such a congress, in whose program the big navy idea holds the most conspicuous place, has no right to give itself out as a Peace Congress, any more than a wolf in sheep's clothing is justified in labeling himself "a sheep, a whole sheep and nothing but a sheep."

It has been reserved for "these last days," when the peace movement is rapidly approaching its consummation, when arbitration is already the settled practice of the nations, to witness the amazing spectacle of a Peace Congress announcement whose front page was adorned with the picture of a gigantic battleship. The peace fathers, two generations and more ago, great as they were in mental insight and fertility of imagination, never dreamed of such a thing as possible, on the part of the friends of war, as making the last and deadliest instruments of the system which the peacemakers had set out to overthrow serve as the symbols and agencies of the kingdom of brotherhood and concord which they proposed to try to establish in the earth. They were well acquainted with the fertility and shrewdness of the devotees of war in inventing decorations to cover its hideous form, and far-fetched arguments to make it